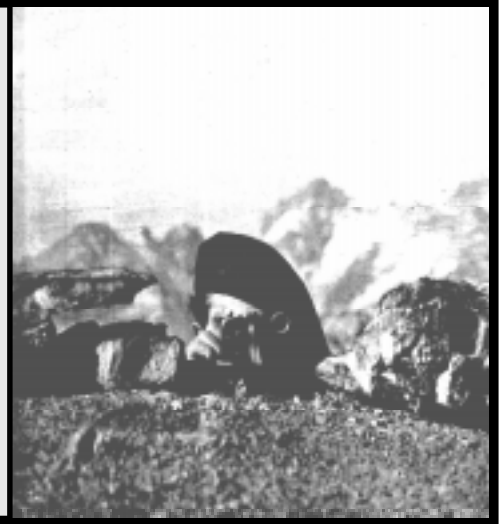


VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Number 6

Jan 96



PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the last issue of *View from The Trenches*.

Actually, that should read "last free issue". *View From The Trenches* has grown far beyond my initial expectations. Issue 1 - 4 pages, 12 readers. Issue 5 - 8 pages, 125 readers. I simply cannot afford to carry on producing and posting that many for nothing. So, it's either fold or charge.

View From The Trenches will cost £1 per issue from now on. I'm a bit wary about taking subscriptions (I don't want to the worry of folding and refunding), but anyone sending in £5 between now and the end of February will get issues 7 to 12. Overseas readers should send me three international reply coupons per issue.

So, what will your money get you? A better *VFTT* I hope. I am allowed to use the photocopier at work to copy *VFTT* for free, but it does not handle large print runs too good, as some of you will have noticed last issue. With your money I shall be able to have a print shop produce *VFTT*, so that the quality does not deteriorate.

As you will no doubt have noticed, this issue is in a booklet format rather than the loose leaf format of previous issues. Further layout changes are also planned from the next issue. Future issues will be 8 pages long for the moment, but if you lot send me enough

material, expect to see possibly 12 pagers per issue before the end of the year.

I'd also like to include 2 scenarios in every issue, but that also depends on what I am sent. If you have an idea for a scenario, write it up and let others see it. It doesn't matter if it isn't playtested, as long as you make that clear. A few brief words on your design would also be nice. If anyone plays any *VFTT* scenario, send me an after action report and your views, so I can pass them on to the designer. I'm sure they'd be interested in how their scenario worked (or not).

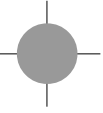
Many of you have asked me to publish names and addresses in *VFTT* to help you find local opponents, and to that end I hope to print my mailing list in future issues (assuming I have space). If anyone DOES NOT want their address made available to everyone, please let me know.

Until next time, roll low and prosper.

Pete Phillipps

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INTENSIVE FIRE '95

Intensive Fire is often risky, but for Neil Stevens, his risk turned into a Critical Hit.

OK, so it sounds corny, but to be honest, it is the only way to describe the success of Intensive Fire '95, the UK's first ASL convention. A risk? Sure, trying to organise the first ASL convention in a country, unsure of the response you would get. A Critical Hit? Definitely, since 60 ASL players turned up (three times the number Neil hoped would attend), making it probably the biggest ASL gathering outside America.

THE VENUE

Intensive Fire '95 was held at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham, near Swindon, from Friday 3rd November to Sunday 5th November. Accommodation was available in the college's Halls of residence at a cost of £35 per night, which included all meals. The gaming was held in the college's purpose-built Conference centre, with three large open rooms being used.

"The organisation was superb, I don't think I've ever seen anything that is even close. Of course, since this was organised by people with ties to the military, maybe that was to be expected?"

Patrik Manlig.

Located in the 'Headquarters', a room set aside for non-gaming activities, were a couple of PCs (which were running Steel Panthers, Battleground: Ardennes, and a copy of the unofficial ASL GAP produced by Steve Zundel), playtest copies of the Kampfgruppe Peiper II mapsheets and The Third Bridge, copies of God Save The King! and Soldiers of the Negus. Copies of various fanzines were also on display and available for purchase (these went very quickly, especially Critical Hit! 3). See elsewhere for reviews of many of these products.

Many people seemed very happy with the bar prices. 80p for a pint of lager - haven't seen those prices for years. Strangely enough, few people seemed to frequent the bar during the evening, although a few four packs were consumed.....

"Saturday evening was great fun. I tried to get a game going, but ended up drinking beer and talking ASL with assorted people. Very enjoyable."

Pete Phillipps

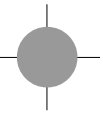
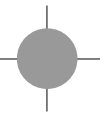
The atmosphere throughout the weekend was very friendly and easy-going. The only formal time was during dinner, which was taken in the Officers Mess and thus required a jacket, shirt and tie.

THE TOURS

One of attractions of Intensive Fire '95 was the opportunity to visit the college's small arms armoury, the AFV hangar and their wargaming laboratory. These are not generally open to the public, but as a serving Army officer studying a degree there, Neil was in a position to offer those arriving on Friday the chance to visit all three, and strangely enough many took advantage of the opportunity.

The most impressive sight in the AFV hangar had to be the King Tiger, although also on display were a T34/85, and a number of modern MBTs, APCs, and scout/armoured cars. All but the Tiger were fully operational, and there are plans for the Tiger to be restored to full working order by 1997. We were allowed into all of the vehicles on display, and many seemed to become CE 6+1 Armour Leaders for an hour, with the Tiger probably being the most popular, even though it could only be accessed by the rather small driver's escape hatch under the hull (and having struggled to get through that hatch, I can understand why CS is so low for many vehicles).

"I'm back from my foray into the international ASL scene. I had a great time at the Intensive Fire tourney. The tours were a big hit - where else can you try a King Tiger on for size! This is



definitely the place to be next year if you can sell it to the wife."

Bob Schaaf.

The small arms armoury contained examples of 20th century small arms from around the world, as well as a number of LATW such as the Panzerfaust, the Bazooka and the PIAT. An arms expert talked us through some of the more common German and British weapons of World War Two, after which we were allowed to walk around the room and handle many of them. No live firing opportunities unfortunately.

In the Simulation and Synthetic Environment Laboratory we were shown some examples of military computer wargaming. The first was an operational level game, set around the Darlington area (simply because they had maps available for the area) for up to three players on each side. This game was used to provide combat data on weapon systems, both real and hypothetical. The second game was a 3D shoot-em-up type vehicle simulator. Although not graphically impressive compared to some home PC games, up to 200 people could be linked together at once to play a real-time engagement! We were also shown a video of a similar American operation where units engaged each other in the Gulf of Mexico

without leaving their bases, simply by having all the data from their onboard computers transmitted to each other.

THE ACTION

The tournament itself commenced on Saturday morning and was based on 14 Fireteams of 4 players. Over the course of the weekend, each team would play 4 matches with each having two scenarios so in Fireteam A two plays would play one scenario, on as attacker and the other defender, and the other two would play the second.

The scenarios played were:

Saturday morning - Le Manoir and North Bank.

"I used to compute in figure wargaming competitions but was put off by all the cheating and arguing (and sometimes crying and fighting!) that went on. I expected similar goings on at Intensive Fire, how wrong I was! I had one 'argument' over a dodgy LOS when an opponent fired so out came the string. After checking he said there was no LOS, but I disagreed. On closer inspection there was a single dark green printers dot about a 10th of a millimeter wide on the other side of the string! Well

Continued on page 5

SCENARIO WIN/LOSS STATISTICS					
SC#	SCENARIO NAME	PLAYS	ALLY	AXIS	DRAW
13	Le Manoir	14	10	4	-
16	No Better Spot to Die	15	5	10	-
A15	Stand Fast the Guards	1	0	1	-
A25	Cold Crocodile	14	8	6	-
A38	North Bank	14	6	8	-
A33	Tettau's Attack	13	5	7	1
A73	Not Out of the Woods Yet	14	6	6	2
F	Paw of the Tiger	1	0	1	-
T1	Gavin's Take	13	6	7	-
T3	Ranger Stronghold	7	3	4	-
G19	A Tough Nut to Crack	1	0	1	-
ASLN60	Call Them Ironsides	1	0	1	-
CH26	Close Order Driel	1	0	1	-
BB5	Going to Church	1	0	1	-
BB10	Surrender or Die	3	3	0	-
	Totals	113	52	58	3

THE TEAM TABLES

	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>PTS</u>	<u>PLAYED</u>	<u>PTS</u>
1st	TEAM 7					20.50	15	22.00
	Patrik Manlig	4	3	0	1	5.00		
	Klas Malmstrom	3	2	1	0	3.50		
	Bernt Ribom	4	4	0	0	6.00		
	Nils-Gunnar Nilsson	4	4	0	0	6.00		
2nd	TEAM 10					18.00	14	20.50
	Peter Bennett	3	2	1	0	3.50		
	Bob Eburne	4	4	0	0	6.00		
	Nick Edelston	4	4	0	0	6.00		
	Paul Case	3	1	0	2	2.50		
3rd	TEAM 5					13.00	12	17.50
	Philippe Leonard	3	2	1	0	3.50		
	Pedro Ramis	2	2	0	0	3.00		
	Serge Bettencourt	3	2	0	1	3.50		
	Roger Cook	4	1	0	3	3.00		
4th	TEAM 3					18.00	16	17.00
	Carl Sizmur	4	2	0	2	3.00		
	Aaron Sibley	4	2	0	2	4.00		
	Derek Tocher	4	3	0	1	5.00		
	Trevor Edwards	4	3	0	1	5.00		
5th	TEAM 13					13.50	13	16.50
	Kevin Beard	3	3	0	0	4.50		
	Chris Littlejohn	4	2	0	2	4.00		
	Chris Coutier	3	1	1	1	2.50		
	Dominic McGrath	3	1	0	2	2.50		
	TEAM	P	W	D	L	PTS	PLAYED	PTS
6th	TEAM 12					16.00	16	16.00
	Alan Smee	4	4	0	0	6.00		
	Neil Piggott	4	1	0	3	3.00		
	Nick Ranson	4	1	0	3	3.00		
	Ian Kenney	4	2	0	2	4.00		
7th	TEAM 8					14.00	14	16.00
	Bob Schaaf	3	2	1	0	3.50		
	Dave Booth	3	2	0	1	3.50		
	Ian Daglish	4	2	0	2	4.00		
	Andrew Dando	4	1	1	2	3.00		
8th	TEAM 4					14.00	14	16.00
	Luc Schonkerren	2	1	0	1	2.00		
	Lutz Pietschker	4	1	0	3	3.00		
	Christian Koppmeyer	4	1	0	3	3.00		
	Ralf Krusat	4	4	0	0	6.00		
9th	TEAM 1					16.00	16	16.00
	Toby Pilling	4	2	0	2	4.00		
	Tim Collier	4	1	0	3	3.00		
	Mike Rudd	4	4	0	0	6.00		
	Mike Standbridge	4	1	0	3	3.00		

	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>PTS</u>	<u>PLAYED</u>	<u>PTS</u>
10th	TEAM 9					11.50	13	14.00
	Lee Brimmicombe-Wood	3	1	0	2	2.50		
	Michael Rhodes	4	0	0	4	2.00		
	Simon Morris	3	2	0	1	3.50		
	Phil Nobo	3	2	0	1	3.50		
11th	TEAM 2					12.00	14	13.50
	Steve Cocks	4	0	0	4	2.00		
	Luis Calcada	4	3	0	1	5.00		
	Pete Phillipps	3	1	0	2	2.50		
	Nick Brown	3	1	1	1	2.50		
12th	TEAM 11					10.00	14	11.50
	Paul O'Donald	3	1	0	2	2.50		
	Alistair Fairburn	3	0	0	3	1.50		
	Paul Ryde-Weller	4	1	0	3	3.00		
	Robin Langston	4	1	1	2	3.00		
13th	TEAM 14					9.50	13	11.50
	William Roberts	3	0	0	3	1.50		
	Neil Stevens	3	1	0	2	2.50		
	Jon Williams	3	0	0	3	1.50		
	Duncan Spencer	4	2	0	2	4.00		
14th	TEAM 6					8.00	14	9.000
	Paul Saunders	4	0	0	4	2.00		
	Andrew Saunders	3	0	1	2	1.50		
	Nigel Brown	4	0	0	4	2.00		
	Arthur Garlick	3	1	0	2	2.50		

A word on scoring: each player was awarded 1.00 per game won (1 1/2 if won in the allotted playing time), a 1/2 for a draw, and a 1/2 point for losing with within the allotted playing time.

Since many teams were unable to complete their 16 games (due to a number of reasons, such as players leaving early), the team scores have been adjusted to take this into account.

Continued from page 3

I suppose the rules do say that if the terrain is visible on both sides of the string LOS is blocked, but in this case the width of the white center dot and where you put the string made a difference, I would have given him the shot, but he wouldn't take it and lost his fire."

Arthur Garlick.

Saturday afternoon - No Better Spot to Die and Cold Crocodiles.

"Guys. Intensive Fire '95 is rocking and rolling here at Shirvenham, UK. After the first two tournament rounds the Belgique team and the Swedish team

are showing us all the ropes and both teams are neck and neck in terms of points scored. Just as well they are playing each other tomorrow then!"

Message posted on CompuServe by Jon Williams while at Intensive Fire '95.

Sunday morning - Tettau's Attack and Not Out of the Woods Yets.

"My only real claim to fame was burning 2 Shermans in the Wooded Hills in Not out of the Woods Yet ('95 Annual) with 2 Panzerfausts. Subsequently the WHOLE hill was on fire with about 25 Blaze Counters. A pretty impressive sight especially on the 5th November 'Bonfire Nigh'".

William Roberts.

Sunday afternoon - Ranger Stronghold and Gavin's Take.

I lost all four of my games, what an awful performance. Just shows us all the difference between FTF and Email and the fact that we have so much time in which to think of our moves. It was a lot of fun and I look forward to next year."

Steve Cocks.

The scenarios were chosen to keep the first Intensive Fire relatively easy, so that it would be open to as many players as possible.

A number of unofficial friendly games were also played in the spare time that players had in the evenings, particularly on Friday. Nobody tried to play a HASL scenario, although one or two people were tempted.

THE RESULTS

The Swedish team, consisting of Patrik Manlig, Bernt Ribom, Nils-Gunnar Nilsson and Klas Malmstrom, were the clear winners of the tournament, winning 13 of the 15 matches they were able to complete. For their superb performance they were rewarded with a set of engraved glass tankards.

Bernt Ribom of Sweden won all five matches he played and was awarded with the Player of the Tournament trophy, a British paratrooper mounted on a stand. Other notable performances were put in by Patrik Manlig (Sweden) and Ralf Krusat (Germany) with 5 wins and 1 loss each, Nils-Gunnar Nilsson (Sweden) and Derek Tocher (England) with 4 wins and 1 loss each, and Alan Smee (Australia), Nick Edelston, Bob Eburne, and Mike Rudd (England) who all won the 4 matches they played. As the top English player, Derek Tocher walked away with a copy of Critical Hit! 3.

"The best thing is the friends I made, both on my team and amongst near neighbours who I did not know existed. There are three guys who play in Blackpool (where I work) and are

real eager to get it on for some serious dice time in the near future."

Trevor Edwards.

Mention must also be made of Christian Koppmeyer who managed to play seven games during the tournament (winning 2, losing 5) and Michael Rhodes who managed to lose all five games he played. Never mind Michael. A Critical Hit consolation prize is on its way from the organisers!

"I played 7 matches, lost 5 and won 2. It was this convention that showed me the difference between a good player and me. I thought if I had played ASL for four years then I would know the game. Wrong, Wrong, Wrong !!! So I came back at home not only with new ideas but with new aims too."

Christian Koppmeyer.

AFTERMATH

To Neil, William, Jon, and Duncan; congratulations on a job well done. For all the time and effort you put in to organise the convention, you are all hereby promoted to 7-0's!

"That was a great weekend. If they do it again next year I sure will be there."

Luis Calcada

Look for news about Intensive Fire '96 (tentatively scheduled for November 15th - 17th) in forthcoming issues of *VFTT*.

"Games without frontiers. War without tears."

Neil Stevens, quoting from Peter Gabriel.

Intensive Fire '95 was organised by Neil Stevens, Jon Williams, William Roberts and Duncan Spencer. They wish to express their deepest gratitude to Ray Tapio and Critical Hit!; the authors of God Save the King!; Time On Target's Mark Neukom; and Philippe "ASL News, Kampfgruppe Peiper, Support ASL in Europe" Leonard for the support they gave. They would also like to especially thank Melissa Schaaf, "who travelled all the way from the States to end up helping us out by doing the odd jobs nobody else wanted to do!"

AVALON HILL TAKES BACKBLAST

Backblast, one of the best ASL zines to have appeared in recent years, is no more. However, Multi-Man Publishing, it's publishers, have been joined by Curt Schilling and together they are teaming with Gary Fortenberry (previously in charge of the ASL Union of Gamers, and editor of the 95 Winter annual), to act as Avalon Hill's in-house ASL team. Together they will be responsible for putting out the Annual, for supplying ASL articles and scenarios for The General, developing submitted products, designing products in-house, and coordinating the rules used in all these as well as answering Q&A and maintaining errata.

Naturally, these events have raised a number of questions. Fortunately Brian Youse, president of MMP is present on the ASL Internet Mailing List, and has been answered many of them. What follows is based on those answers.

"So Brian, how did this deal come about?"

Avalon Hill contacted Curt Schilling to work on ASL. Curt, realizing he needed help and familiar with our work, asked us to join in. JD Frazer had just asked off the MMP staff, so we had a slot to fill and the rest is history.

"A couple of months ago you were announcing that ASL was dead and that AH wasn't worth bothering with. Curt Schilling also had a lot of bad things to say about AH and the Dotts following his failed attempt to acquire ASL off them. Now you have both joined up with the dreaded enemy :-). What has brought about the change of heart towards AH?"

Giving that our only concern is the continued flow of quality ASL stuff, this seemed like a chance to get more quality stuff in/out of the pipeline. It seemed by AH's

talking to Curt that they're committed to getting ASL stuff out. My posts on ASL were legit and truly my feelings based on ASL being "dead". Clearly, now, ASL is not dead. Thus my "change of heart".

"Do you feel confident that you can have a good working relationship with Gary Fortenberry/the Dotts?"

Yeah, we do. Gary has told us that he is "rededicated" to ASL and has sold his magic cards to boot. We're confident that this arrangement will work out.

"I understand if you don't answer this, but what are you guys getting out of this arrangement? And do you think that Avalon Hill's commitment to ASL has changed with this deal?"

We get a pittance, and out of that we have to pay for submissions. In other words, I ain't quitting my day job. 8) We feel it is for the good of the hobby, because quality products should be rolling out of Avalon Hill for some time to come. More quality ASL can only be GOOD for the hobby. We hope that Avalon Hill's commitment has changed with the signing of this deal.

The six of us are part-timers with Gary being closest to being "full-time".

"What does this deal mean for Tactiques, who are/were distributed by MMP?"

We're not sure right now about Tactiques. I would suspect that we will no be facilitating the distribution of Tactiques in the US. If this is the end result, all I can say is that I'm glad if we somehow helped even one gamer receive that excellent fanzine.

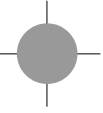
I would like to make it clear that we will no longer be selling any issue of Backblast magazine, including back issues.

"Will you be maintaining a presence on the list? Personally or as a group?"

We will still be frequent posters. We are working out the details on how to accept email questions.

"So what are the plans for future ASL products?"

Our first efforts will be to help Gary with KGP II. It is very close to being finished and we've been working with him for the past few weeks to complete this task. Next up will



be the '96 Annual, and after that is a HASL project MMP has been working on for some time, which is based on the British attack to take and hold the Pegasus Bridge. We've reached an agreement with Steve Dethlefsen where he'll submit his Tarawa module to us for publication by Avalon Hill, and we're talking to Kurt Martin about The Third Bridge.

"What about Mud and Blood, and the scenario/map pack mentioned in the 95 annual?"

We're trying to get in touch with Mr. Swann about Mud and Blood, but until that happens we can't really say if we'll be putting that out or not. Currently, we do not have a signed contract for "Mud and Blood".

We're gathering some scenarios for a possible "pack", but as with everything else it isn't our call what gets published or when it gets published.

We would be interested in talking to the other amateur publishers about any products they would like to submit for publication by Avalon Hill. On that note, we are looking for help! Submissions in the form of articles suitable for The General or the annual, historical scenarios with references, and modules. You can send submissions to either MMP or AH.

There is also a strong desire amongst us to finish the game system and get out the Allied/Axis Minor Armour and Ordnance.

"Any plans to release additional material for SASL, such as tables for the other nations?"

AH asked us if we thought it was worth supporting, I responded that it seemed real popular on the list. If anyone's got some tables worked up and tried out, submit 'em. I wouldn't expect to see another SASL module or anything (but who knows?) but they could be used in the Annual/General I guess.

"What direction will ASL take after KGPII, Tarawa, your HASL module, and the minors are finished?"

Too soon to tell.

If you just took the ideas that I have received over the past few days, we'd more than double the existing ASL product line! Clearly, we can't do it all the first year or two (or five!).

Things we work on will be driven by submissions we receive - we can't design it all in-house since that would stifle the creative energies of the ASL hobby and would also take forever - and approval by Avalon Hill for any products - I may find the Spanish Civil War to be the be all/end all with regard to ASL, but they may not want to see anything on that period relating to ASL. They're the boss.

I'd like to see more ASL in The General, a smaller, more responsive, twice a year annual (a and b), intro ASL, complete SASL, pre/post WWII (Israel, Korea, SCW...). Will all this happen? I hope so! We plan on reinvigorating ASL at Avalon Hill, and we won't fail for lack of trying.

TIME ON TARGET

Ω

Time On Target 2 is out now. For \$22 (including postage) you get 20 (!) scenarios based on the fighting between the German 2nd Marine Infantry Division and the British VIII Corps and XII Corps in April of 1945, a sheet of full-color Railway Embankment overlays, and 32 counters. Expect to see a full review next issue. It is available from Kinetic Energy Productions, P.O. Box 291580, Hollywood, CA90029.

Ω

FINAL FIRE

That's all for this issue. Hope you enjoyed it. Feel free to write and tell me what you think, or even contribute.

Issue 7 should be out at the start of March.

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES is the newsletter for the British ASL community. It costs £1 per issue (overseas readers should send three International Reply Coupons). All correspondence should be sent to VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, LE5 0FQ or 100665,267@compuserve.com.

